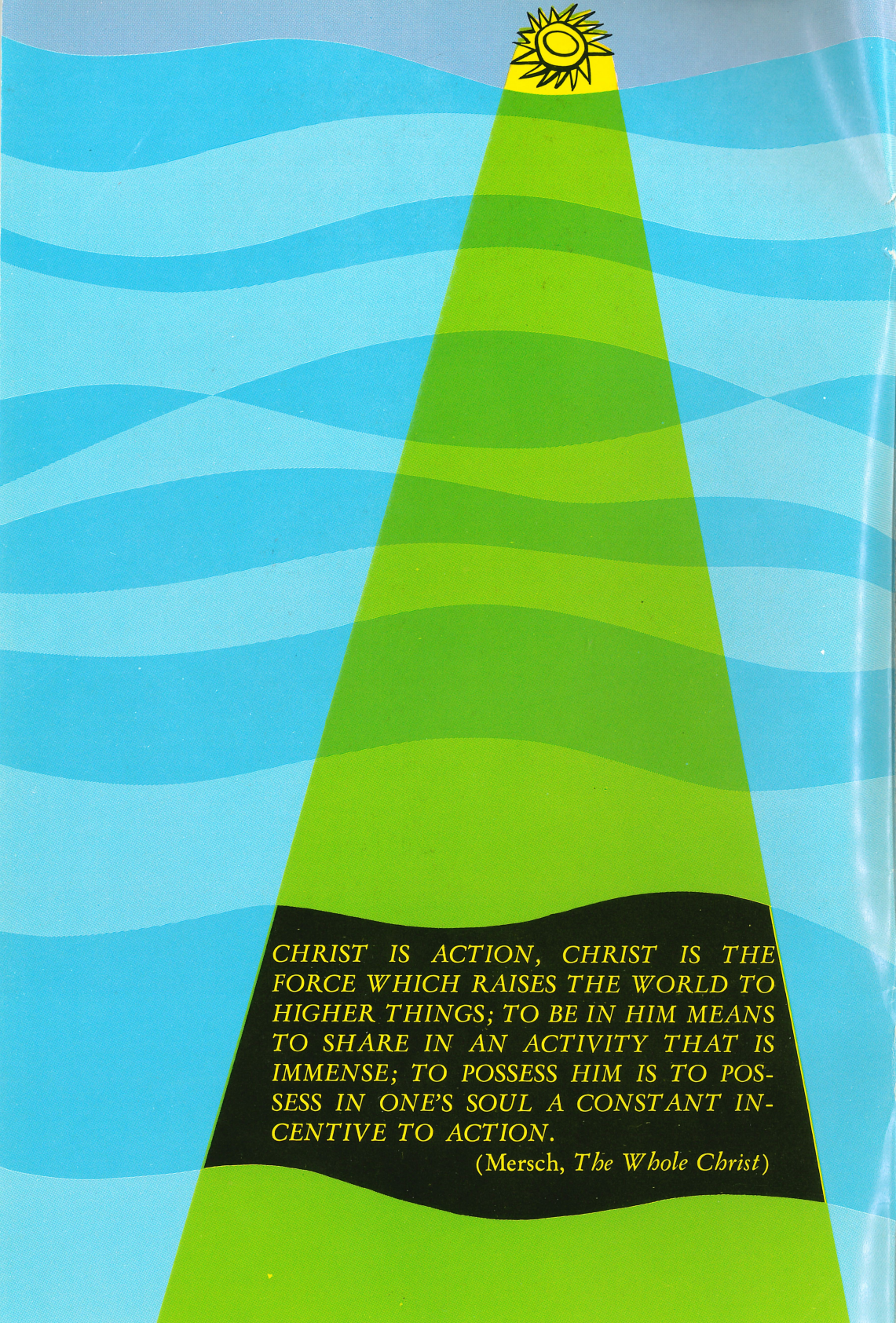
Medical Missionary

The Culture of India—July - August, 1961


CHRIST IS ACTION, CHRIST IS THE FORCE WHICH RAISES THE WORLD TO HIGHER THINGS; TO BE IN HIM MEANS TO SHARE IN AN ACTIVITY THAT IS IMMENSE; TO POSSESS HIM IS TO POSSESS IN ONE'S SOUL A CONSTANT INCENTIVE TO ACTION.
(Mersch, *The Whole Christ*)

July-August 1961 v. 35 no. 4

the Medical Missionary

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The Medical Mission Sisters, founded in 1925, by Mother Anna Dengel, M.D. in Washington, D.C., are a religious congregation, dedicated to the care of the sick in the missions. The Sisters staff hospitals in India, Africa, Pakistan, S. Vietnam and South America. American Provincialate: 8400 Pine Rd., Philadelphia 11, Pa.

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Patna, India. Celebrating a Hindu festival.

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Two Religions In One

Hinduism is a mixture of two religions in one, a combination of what may be called an "outer" and an "inner" religion, the one popular and polytheistic, and other pantheistic. The "outer" religion involves the worship of many gods and goddesses; Hindu classics and popular traditions commonly refer to the number of these deities as "thirty-three crore" (thirty-three times ten million). The "inner" religion is the belief in one God but with the pantheistic concept of God as the only truly existing thing there is.

First, The "Outer" Hinduism

The "outer" religion of Hinduism's 330,000,000 gods and goddesses has as its oldest written record in India the famous "Rig Veda" ("hymn" and "knowledge," especially "sacred knowledge"). The 1,017 hymns of the "Rig Veda" constitute the most sacred of Hinduism's many sacred books.

The "Rig Veda" shows a belief in many gods, some of whom ride through the skies in golden chariots drawn by red horses. These gods give good weather or health or cows or children or victory over enemies in return for offerings by priests, of milk or grain or intoxicating drink or the flesh of animals.

Notable among Hinduism's other sacred books, all in Sanskrit, are three other "Vedas," many "Puranas" ("ancient things"), 112 philosophical essays called "Upanishads" ("sitting opposite" a teacher), and two huge epic poems—the "Mahabharata" ("Great India") and the "Ramayana" ("Rama's Way").

Transmigration And Caste

Along with the worship of these and other gods and goddesses like them, Hinduism teaches transmigration of souls and the observance of caste customs. Hindus believe that after death the soul goes to the particular heaven of its particular god, where it is rewarded for its devotion to that god. Then the soul comes back to earth again and is joined to (transmigrates to) another body and lives a second life in it until death separates soul and body again, and the soul goes again to its god's particular heaven. After that, it transmigrates to another body, and the same unending process goes on again and again forever.

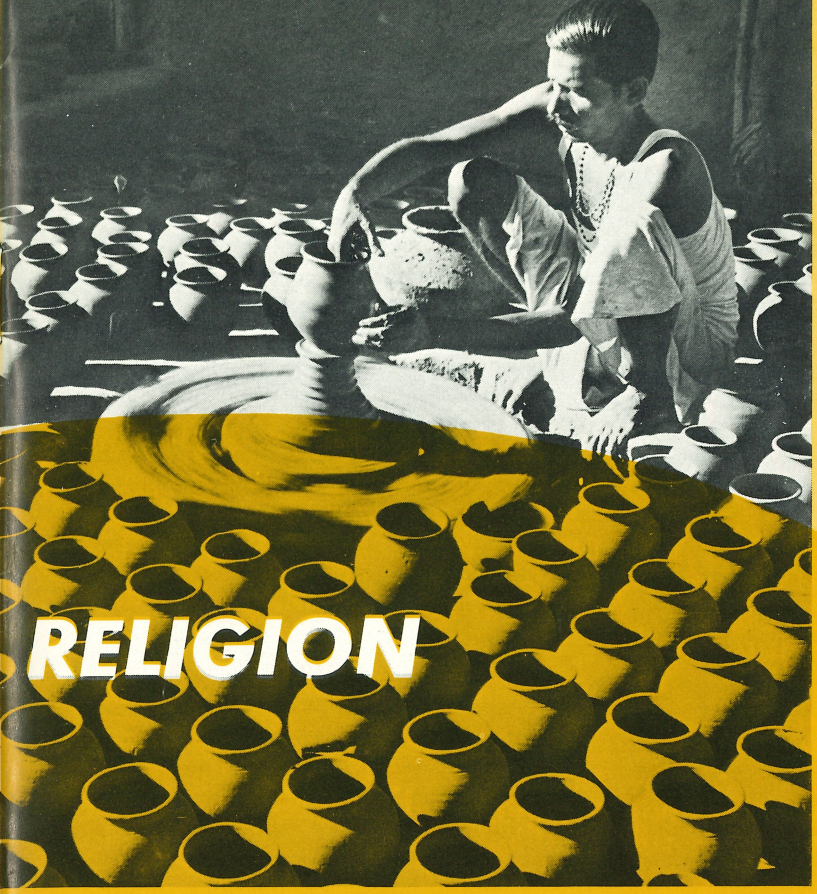
INDIA'S

Rev. Paul Dent, S.J.

"Wheel Of Existence"

Thus the soul is bound inexorably to the "wheel of existence" that turns round and round from birth to death to birth to death. Moreover, the soul is punished or rewarded not only by shorter or longer periods of residence in the particular heaven of its particular God; it is also punished or rewarded on this earth. For here on earth there are happy people and unhappy people, rich and poor, healthy and sick, wise and unwise, and even lucky and unlucky, and the soul is born into one or other of these groups according to the merits or demerits of its previous lives.

This belief is the key to the understanding of the caste system in Hinduism. For the Hindu teaching is that a person belongs to a high caste as a reward for merits in a previous life, or



RELIGION

According to one school of Indian Philosophy, the material world including the various bodies in which souls are imprisoned, is an evolution of God, as the pitcher is an evolution of the clay.

to a low caste for demerits in a previous life—to the low caste of the Musahars (mouse-eaters), for example, or to the other groups of what have been called Hinduism's "untouchables."

Hinduism believes that castes are fixed and irrevocable during one lifetime. No amount of merits or effort can lift a man into a higher caste during a single life span, but, if he faithfully observes his particular caste's regulations, he may gain so much merit that his soul may be born into a higher or even the very highest caste in his next rebirth . . . Or a person's demerits may be so great that in his next rebirth his soul may go even lower than the lowest of human out-castes, may even find itself united to the body of a donkey or who knows what!

"Inner" Hinduism

The relatively smaller number of people who believe in "inner" Hinduism teach that there is an escape from the necessity of being born again and again —for those who are able to make use of it. The followers of "inner" Hinduism like to explain their beliefs in parables, which are much used everywhere in India to explain and prove things. There is the parable of the village potter: According to one school of Indian philosophy the material world, including the various bodies in which souls are imprisoned is an evolution of God, as the pitcher is an evolution of clay. Another philosopher, Sankara, uses the famous illustration of the rope and the snake. The world and ourselves are illusions, says he. "We

think we see a snake, i.e., a real world and real selves, but all that is there is a rope (i.e., the one reality, God.") The parable of the rope and snake is "inner" Hinduism's explanation of how it happens that we *think* that we and the world exist. They say we are simply under an illusion—we *are* an illusion. Else we would recognize that we *are* the one, infinite God who is all that is, all that there has been, all that there ever will be. If this statement startles the non-Hindu into asking the Hindu how it is possible for God to be under an illusion, the answer is ready at hand. "You would not ask that question," the Hindu will say, "if you were not under the illusion that *you* exist and under the illusion that *I* exist."

Vedanta and Yoga: The Philosophies of Hinduism

The explanation of these parables is an explanation, at least of the main lines, of the two most important of the six traditional systems of philosophy which "inner" Hinduism has elaborated to explain itself. These two philosophies are Vedanta (end of the "Veda" and the Yoga (yoke, union, contemplation). In fact, these two philosophies, particularly as exemplified in the Sanskrit writings of Sankaracharya of Sankara (9th Century A.D.), *are* "Inner" Hinduism.

"Inner" Versus "Outer" Hinduism

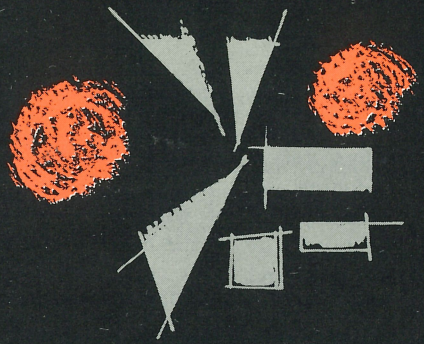
How do the teachers of "inner" Hinduism, which is pantheism when it affirms that nothing else exists except the one, infinite, eternal God, reconcile their teachings to the beliefs of the vast multitudes, who are also truly Hindu, but who, in their "outer" Hinduism, worship 330,000,000 gods and goddesses? They say to the people of "outer" Hinduism: "They who follow the way of the gods receive the rewards of the gods, a little bit of heaven, between rebirths on earth. The spiritually immature who are satisfied with this or that particular god or goddess and think him or her the one, infinite, eternal God, will never obtain release from the wheel of existence and all its illusory lives and illusory deaths until they realize that only God exists and all else is illusion." But how is one to attain to the realization that he—or—she—is God? This is the most fundamental question of "inner" Hinduism, and its teachers say they have three ways of finding the answer.

First, there is the way of the yogi or practicer of the Yoga philosophy mentioned above. With a supreme use of the powers of concentration, along with the practice of self-control, the follower of this way—and innumerable Hindus have tried this say in the last two thousand and more years—recites to himself the following formula: "I am Brahma (supreme being). That (the supreme being) thou art."

But even Hindus find the Yoga way inhuman and incredible, and other millions of them have sought a second, and easier way of achieving their desired realization; this is the way of devotion to or loving contemplation of their particular god or goddess.

But Krishna himself had yet a third way, which is the way of unselfish performance of duty. This he is shown explaining in the ancient Sanskrit poem of unknown authorship which was the subject of Gandhi's daily mental prayer, the "Bhagavata Gita" ("The Divine Song").

(Abstracted from "Perspectives in Religion and Culture," Paladin Press, Cincinnati.)



Crisis in Indian Culture

India is being forced to industrialize
in our times and to do
it very quickly.
This means many changes in family,
society and thinking.
These changes could
happen in different ways.
How will industrialization affect India?
How will it affect Christianity in India?
Rev. Anthony Parel gives
one Indian opinion on
this question.

Father Parel is an Indian Jesuit doing graduate work at Harvard.

INDIA is now passing through the period of industrialization. In popular language, or in strict statistical terms, this is often taken to mean that as a result of industrialization, the Indians will become richer, will have more factories, more bicycles, etc. On a deeper analysis, however, it becomes clear that if industrialization is to succeed in India, i.e., if it is to become an essential part of the Indian's *mode* of life, it must somehow acquire a rational connection to his *view* of life. There is an intimate relationship between any given society's material culture and its spiritual attitudes: It is even more intimate in the case of an industrialized society which calls for a highly rational organization of life. And, as we know from history, the genesis of industrialism was as much the result of a particular spiritual ethos, of a particular world-view, as of the adoption of new techniques.

Hence the coming of industrialization to India means much more than mere material improvements. It means fundamentally a spiritual improvement. It will call for more than skillful economic calculations and the arrangement of economic factors of capital and labor. It will require the advent of that *spirit* of industrial activity thanks to which alone these very calculations and arrangements will become necessary, natural, and normal to the Indian. And only when such a spirit permeates Indian society will industrialism have a chance to succeed, if not to survive, in India.

Industrialization: Spiritual Revolution or Cultural Change

If what we have been saying is true, India's bid for industrialism is tacitly, at least, a bid for a spiritual revolution, for a cultural change, for the adoption of a new spiritual ethos, for the rejection of whatever is hostile to industrialism in the existing traditional culture, and for a change in the social structure itself. What is required is a change of the spirit in which the Indian culture was conceived and lived for the past centuries. For the spirit of industrialism is rational and secular, not mythological and mystical. It springs from a positive acceptance of the world, from an attitude of dominance over matter and the material creation. According to this spirit the "good life," conceived as an increasingly perfectible thing, cannot be accepted on suffrance as it were, either as *minus malum* (lesser evil) or as morally meaningless. Indeed, in many instances the secular activity acquires a tendency to become *per se* valid either out of an absolute religious motive, as in the case of the early Puritans, or out of an absolute atheistic motive, as in the case of modern Communists.

In any case, whatever the motivation, the spirit that gives rise to the industrial activity demands some absolute commitments in terms of which that activity becomes an absolute psychological necessity. Furthermore, industrialism will have to go beyond the static and dualistic categories of understanding the secular and other-worldly activities, categories characteristic of all societies in their pre-industrial stage.

Secular Activity Considered Inferior

Now the traditional Indian cultural values may be best understood precisely in a dualistic, static, and highly mystical context. Within this context, the rational, secular activities are generally contrasted against, and considered

inferior (if not meaningless) to what are often taken for mystical and holier activities. In the traditional Indian view only these latter categories of activities appear to be justified and necessary.

The secular activities, even in the *ashrama* (Hindu Monastic) concept of life, are no more than a preparation for a superior activity, and as it were follow *despite* those holier convictions, perhaps out of the mere instinct of survival and subsistence. This may well be one of the reasons for the subsistence economy characteristic of most pre-industrialized societies.

The monism of the Vedanta — the fine distinctions of it are irrelevant from our point of view—might itself be considered as the metaphysical solution for the dualism that we are discussing. Reality is explained away, perhaps even escaped. But since the solution given by Indian philosophical traditions is offered in static and dualistic terms, the cultural attitudes which owe their origin to that solution naturally become closed and unprogressive. The sociological effect of this dualistic value-system is the obvious economic indifference and stagnation: the secular activity, being not necessary, appears at all levels to be content with mere instinctual organization of life. It never develops into a complicated rational system which could lift the secular life above the subsistence level. It never becomes truly scientific. Hence it is, that as Christopher Dawson remarks, a science of economics could not have arisen anywhere but in the West.

One aspect of the cultural problem in India today is, thus, the need for a de-theologization or de-mythologization of life to a level that makes industrial life both necessary and moral. How this can be done on strictly dualistic terms, one cannot very well see. For as long as the secular life is accepted as an escape or a concession, the secular activity that proceeds from such an attitude will lack the necessary degree of motivation and daring and involvement in the temporal and secular order. Now, if an escape from the secular life is not feasible, neither will an absolute acceptance of it be without its own difficulties. A de-theologized secular activity still needs some motivation and spiritual justification. For, as we have suggested, just as there must be an utopia to bring about every social change, so there must be an ideology behind every social activity. India's present problem, then, may be understood at two levels; the problem of choosing between an absolute negation and an absolute affirmation of the secular activity; and the problem of finding an ideology and a utopia that will make such a choice possible.

Manifestations of Social Change

Surveying the contemporary Indian scene one notices obvious manifestations of social change. To what precise goal they point to one does not know for certain. There are several competitors in the field with more or less clear goals.

Vinoba Bhave's "do-good philosophy"

There is first of all the do-good philosophy of Vinoba Bhave with its highly emotional approach to the problem of social improvement. This most distinctive remnant of Gandhism tries to present a new view of the Indian (who cannot be a very far removed descendant of the "noble savage" of Rousseau), living in happy Indian villages, uncontaminated by avarice, hatred

Prime Minister Nehru addressing an Independence rally in Delhi. Every sixth person in the world is an Indian. With a population of over 438 million, India is the second most populous nation in the world and presents a colorful mosaic of races, religions and cultures. In India, religion plays a far greater role in social and political life than it does in most western countries.

or by the abuse of power. Apart from its demonstrated lack of capacity for the rational organization of social energies, Bhave's movement lacks also a balanced view of the efficacy of brotherly love to bring about social changes. It has not given a solution of the problem of duality we have discussed before. Nor has it recognized the role of force and authority as agents of social change. Instead, it relies too much on consent and persuasion. In certain forms of it, especially those advocated by Jai Prakash Narain, it overlooks the indispensable part that a centralized state alone can play in social regulation.

The Communist Solution

The Communist solution, being universally the same in essentials, needs no elaboration, except that in the Indian context, it merely chooses to deny one term of reference of India's cultural duality. In this sense, Communism stands quite antithetical to the spirit of Vedantic monism and India's classical culture as a whole. The Communists gain a certain advantage, however, because of their willingness to break from the past. And for this reason, as also for others (like efficient organization), a large number of intellectuals find Communism appealing, perhaps even as the only available instrument of radical social change and secularization of life.

Bhubanesnar — The Lingraj Temple. Superb specimens of ancient architecture are to be found all over India. Many of these temples were built out of solid rock. Most of the great Indian art is an expression of religious beliefs and symbolism.

The Utilitarian Solution

The vast majority of Indians, however, have taken an approach to cultural change which appears utilitarian in some respects and illogical in others. A large number of Congress-walas (members of the Congress party), Socialists, and even orthodox Hindus of the communal political parties belong to this group. They are generally dedicated to the proposition of an industrialized India but would not go wholeheartedly to the extent of effectively destroying the harmful traditions of the past. Indeed there is sometimes the reverse process of glorifying the past to the ridiculous extent of seeing the modern industrial culture as the natural outcome of past values. Thus we see a simultaneous affirmation of past spiritual values ("the Indians are spiritual") and the appropriation of what can be considered, against those values, the crudest forms of materialism. How else are we to understand many things that happen in contemporary India? While programmes for the most revolting type of population control (like sterilization of the humans) are advocated, the cattle, the monkey, the insect — sources of vast nuisance to India's economy — are allowed their

traditional position on the absurd hypothesis of the sacredness of all forms of life. In brief, the majority of Indians seem to act as though they want to preserve the realities and the symbols of the past—the cow, the *dhoti,* vegetarianism and the idol—and simultaneously to enjoy the benefits of the machine and the atom.

The Western-Oriented Indian

There is a minority of Indians, Nehru may be considered their best representative, who form a difficult category. Often they are referred to as "Western oriented." In fact they are sufficiently detached from the past and its symbols. They are prepared to accept new symbols and new values. But in doing so they feel that they are accepting the "West." A cultural dualism of a special and subtle type plagues them. Like Nehru, they feel to be neither fully of the West nor of the East, to be at home nowhere and out of place everywhere. Their modern culture seems to give them a sense of identity: they are not fully integrated, although they want to be integrated without fully knowing how. Perhaps they are the natural products of industrialism when it touches a culture which has a personality and philosophy of its own. Perhaps they are a passing phenomenon, which with the appreciation of the universality of industrialism might disappear. And only with the understanding of the human value of industrialism can they transcend the East-West cultural dualism that industrialism today accentuates.

Except for this psychological dilemma, this small minority is the typical product of modern culture in a non-Western society. Intellectually they are rational; religiously, agnostic; and their total world-view, secular.

Industrialization calls for giving up past

As to which of these cultural currents will become dominant it is too early to give a reasonable answer. It will depend on how easily new values will be communicated and how effectively new social habits corresponding to these values will be created. If our original premise of the connection between idea and action is correct, India has only one alternative: either she must reject the mythical past or she must reject industrialization itself.

We must recall in this connection that social changes are often brought about neither solely by ideas nor solely by external arrangements of social activity. They are affected by an interplay of both, partly by the instilling of ideas and partly by the techniques themselves. In any case, all that we can and need say is that *if* industrialism is to succeed, cultural values hostile to it must go; and that *when* it has succeeded we shall know that they have gone and that new values have taken their place. But this interplay of thought and action is not an automatic process, as Marx appears to think. It is brought about by conscious activity of groups of human beings. It is at this level of consciousness that industrialism is initially advanced and later kept in sufficient momentum. As Nehru himself has recently said, "A deliberate attempt was necessary not only to introduce modern techniques in a factory but a modern way of thinking among those who manage it. A man successful in a factory in the material sense may still be wrapped up in things of no relevance to modern ways." To make secular activity relevant to thought, to unwrap the hold of the past on one's

thinking seems to be what industrialism calls for in India today.

Christianity in India

Facing a situation like this, what is Christianity doing? It has three problems, mainly to solve: the problem of its own identity in India, the problem of cultural duality, and that of spiritual conversion.

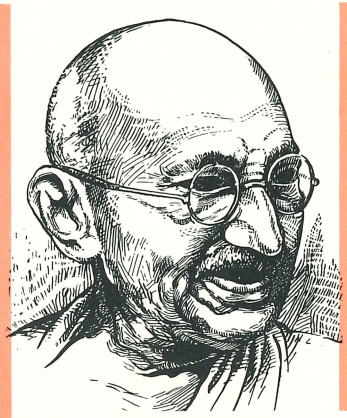
Christianity in India suffers from a real disadvantage of being alien, being Western. Like the secularized Indian, the christianized Indian feels that he is not at home there. In an effort to overcome this, Christianity at present appears to be making an attempt to identify itself with Indian culture. This appraisal of the problem now drives Christianity in the direction of India's past traditions, to the Vedas, the Upanishads, etc. These attempts at adaptation are limited not only to modes of thought and expression in art and literature, but also in external manner of life — diet, apparel, etc. — things that will most likely disappear in the event of thorough going industrialism. And all this search for identity is taking place at a time when it is not at all clear what India's exact identity is, and when the general thrust of industrialism would demand India to move away from the past.

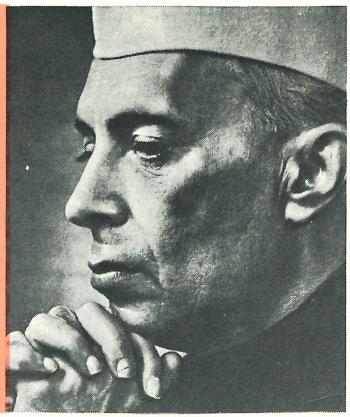
The problem of dualism arising out of the distinction between the secular and religious activity is not something that Christianity finds peculiar to India: it is a problem that industrial culture tends to accentuate. Only, in India this becomes further complicated by Christianity's present will to go back to India's past and its general attitude towards Hinduism as such. Now it may be true that the modern secular man does not find his answers in popular Christianity any more than in mystical Hinduism. And it must not be forgotten that much of Christian propaganda in India is done today at the popular level which does not specifically try to understand the nature of the secular culture or of the secular activity. In the light of such an analysis one thing must appear as important: if the wrong answers are continued to be given to the nature and reality of the secular activity, the spirit of secularism upon which the success of industrialism surely depends, can easily proliferate into scepticism and atheism.

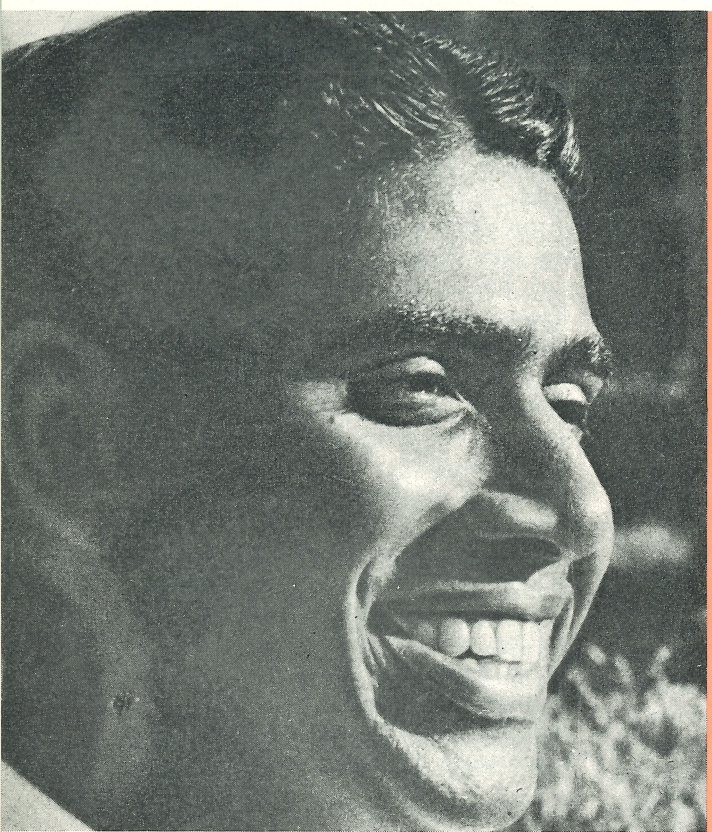
The sociological problem of change and industrial revolution should make the work of conversion on a social scale more and more difficult. On the one hand, Christianity demands the formal rejection of Hinduism; yet on the other, if Hinduism were to be rejected it can either mean that another religion has been accepted, or that religion as such has been rejected, or that a new ideology has been substituted for religion itself. All these three eventualities are possible. A national rejection of Hinduism, which is highly doubtful, does not necessarily mean gain of faith in Christianity. It is misleading to think that secularism creates a spiritual vacuum. Very often a subjective belief fills the place emptied by religion. The dictum that "nature abhors vacuum" has even a sociological verification. If the loss of faith in religion is induced by an unanswered secularism, what is questioned, very often will not be any particular religion as such, but the phenomenon of religion itself.

Consequently to expect industrialism to make short work of Hinduism is highly naive as it is dangerous, if some advantage to Christianity is expected as a result of this. If we assume that traditional religious values do not, and

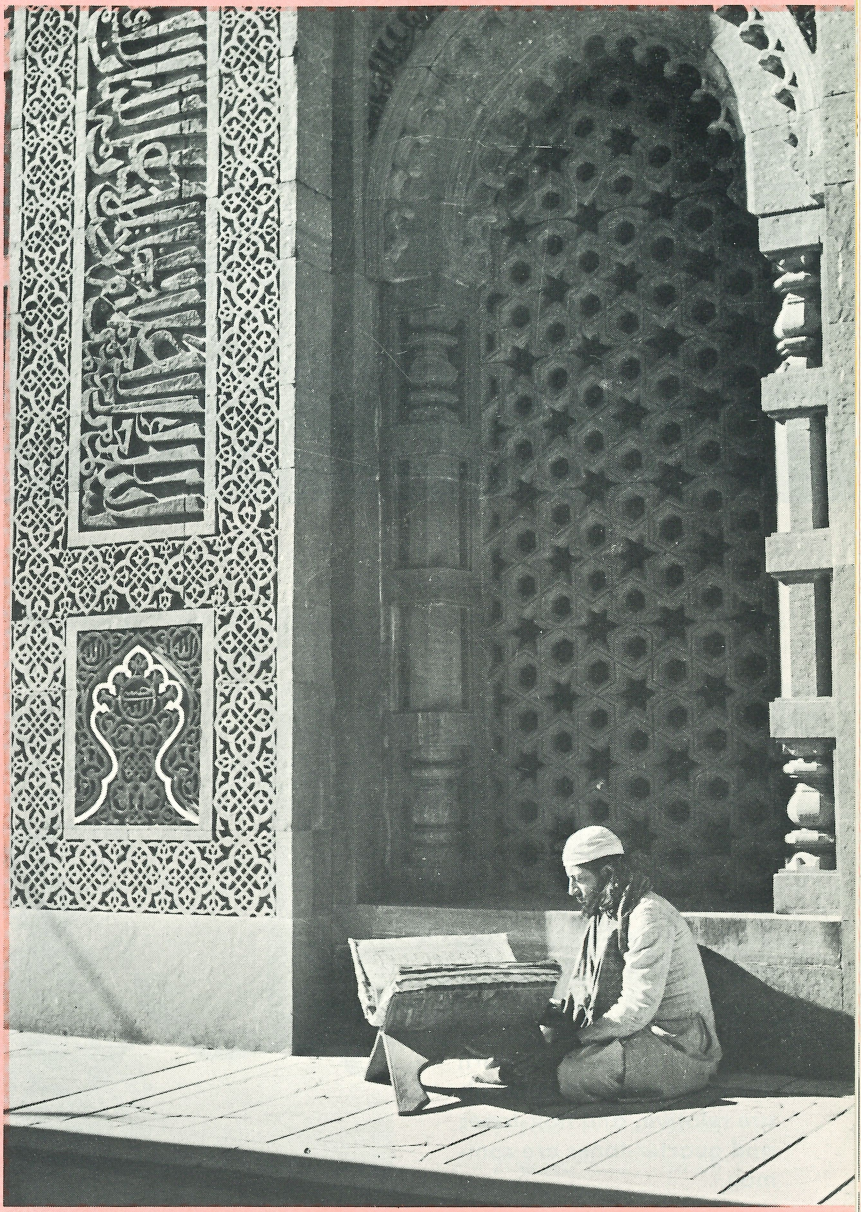
Under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi (who launched his freedom movement through passive resistance and non-cooperation) and Prime Minister Nehru, India won her freedom in August, 1947.







An Indian Christian. Today Christianity is the third largest religion in India, though it still embraces only 2.3% of the population. A small Christian community has existed in India since the days of St. Thomas the Apostle. Christian Schools and colleges have played a vigorous part in education.



A Bombay Muslim reading the Koran. Islam came to India in the eighth century. There are about 42 million Muslims in India today, representing ten percent of the Indian population.

Illuminated fountain at the India Gate, Delhi. To take care of the growing population, a vigorous program of industrialization seems essential. The imposition of an industrial economy upon a predominately agricultural and handicraft society presents great problems of social and cultural adjustments.

Indian dancing, like music, started as part of religious ceremonies. The essence of Indian dancing lies in the mudras — gestures made with eyes, head, hands and body. It also employs a variety of rhythms. The main emphasis in Indian music is on melody and improvisation, instead of on harmony as in western music. Pitches and intervals are relative, and half-tones and quarter-tones are common.

cannot understand the nature of secularism, we must also remember that religion has the ability to become an ideology and that Hinduism might attempt to reveal this ability. What is more, we must emphasize those aspects of Christian values that do justice to the secular activities. In any case, the power of Christianity to cope with the process of social change in India, (realistically speaking), is rather potential than actual.

If these ideas are not encouraging from a religious point of view, and if they have some semblance of validity, they should only urge more searching answers, new categories of thought and expression. What appears to be reasonably certain is that on dualistic, static, and non-evolutionary terms, the answers to the problem of secularism become increasingly useless, if not harmful. Witness the phenomenon of modern scepticism and atheism, which in many instances are responses to the insufficiency of the traditional answers. Perhaps the gravity of the problem may force new and more positive avenues of thought, as, for instance, opened by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

The crisis in culture in India is as much an economic as a spiritual problem. It is a problem that not even more fully industrialized cultures have successfully solved. Only, in pre-industrialized societies like India and China, partly because of their population, partly because of their past philosophic moorings and partly finally because of the radicalism that is called for, this crisis appears in one of its most bewildering forms.

Eight out of every ten Indians live in half a million tiny villages of less than two thousand inhabitants. Only 20% can read and write. Every year the scarcity of land drives millions of villagers to the cities in search of work.

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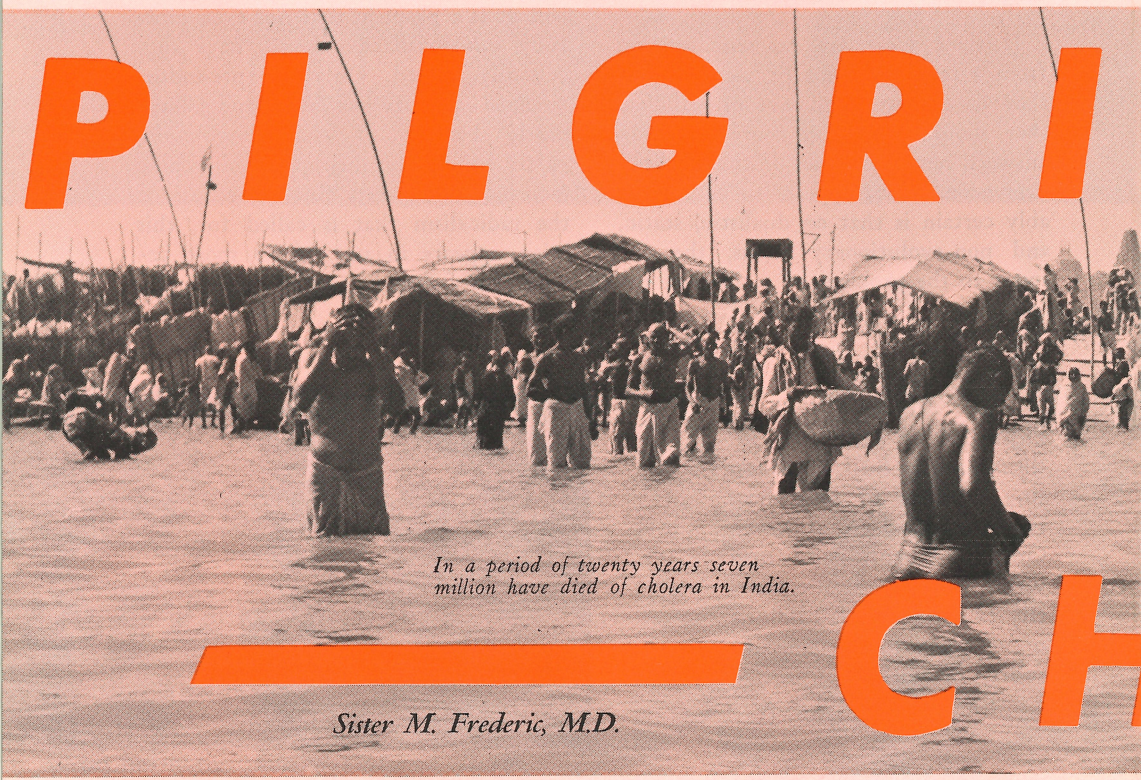
PILGRIMAGE time is always cholera time. Thousands flock to the Ganges for their holy bath and then move back to the town for a visit to the temples. Ten years ago, the story would have been tragic. This year, somehow, cholera didn't even make the headlines. The local papers carried the ordinary front page news that everyone who was coming in for the puja celebrations and for the big mela should get his cholera injections. The vaccinators were busy all



In a period of twenty years seven million have died of cholera in India.

Sister M. Frederic, M.D.

around. No epidemic ever came, despite the fact that the Ganges on which we live is one of the endemic regions of the world for Cholera!

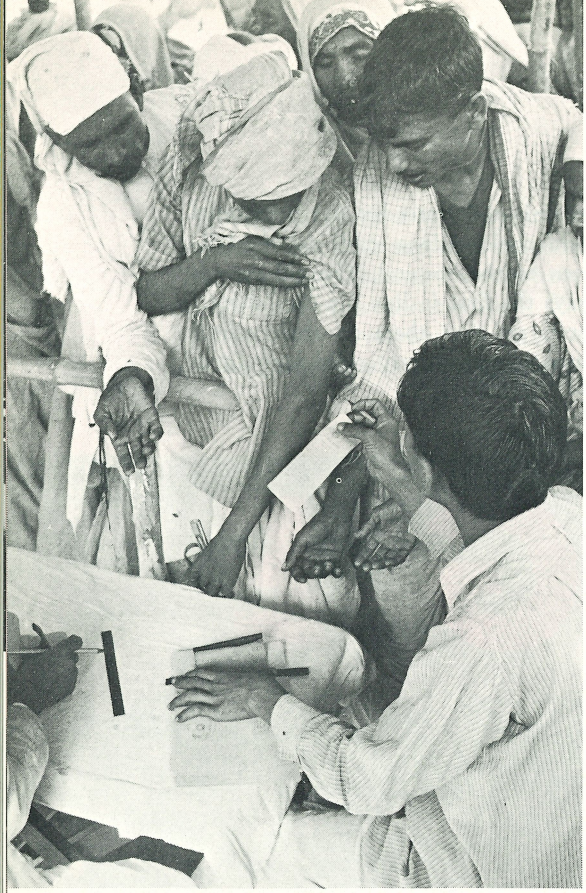
Smallpox is dramatic in its public health aspects — it is a *gift* of the goddess. But cholera is a sign of the rage of Durga. Rage never calls forth the same emotional response as a gift of love, does it?

The old man told me that around here people do not speculate as to its cause. They relate it to the pilgrimages, and therefore to Durga's rage, but they

rarely object to vaccination. The idea of contaminated water has not penetrated the illiterate level of the people. But the *word* cholera alone sends the most illiterate post haste to the vaccinator, and even to the hospital. The old man is the village school master. His pupils are always the first in line for the "shots." And when Sr. Carmela, R.N. and our nurses go over there on their school health rounds, they put on enough of a drama to make every child long for a

rubber needle! Our public health program pays dividends in healthy children.

The people. know cholera, its signs and symptoms. Taking the medical history may literally end up with a so-called chief complaint of, "The lady has cholera." To such an inane query of the doctor as, "How do you know?" the only answer one is likely to get is, "Well, look." I know. I tried it. Even the other night when one of the nearby village headmen came in with four patients, and said, "They have cholera," after a momentary "Yes?" I went right to the



routine, despite the fact that all four looked well, and had only begun to have diarrhoea. They really had cholera, and one child died, despite early and adequate treatment.

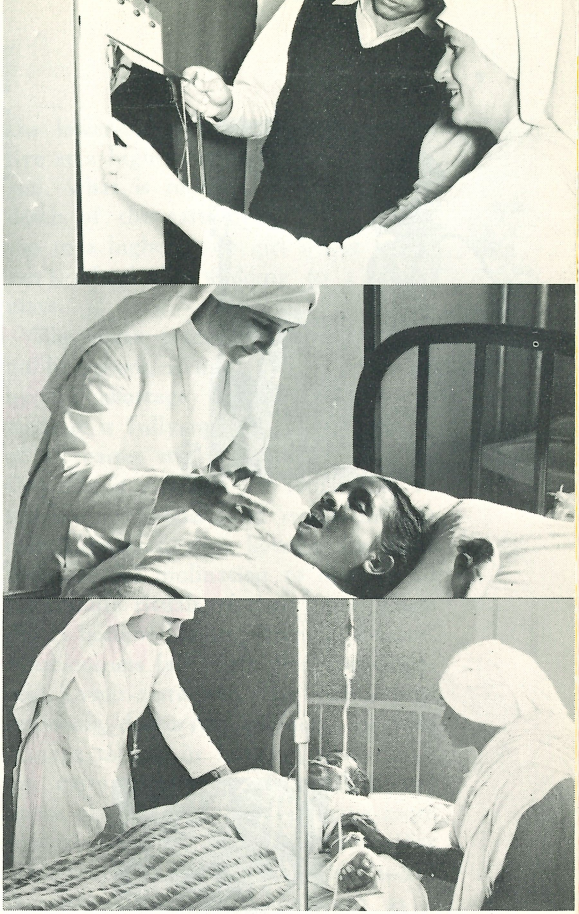
Once we saw the patients, the headman asked for vaccination for himself and all those who came along that night, and he begged us to go out in the morning to take care of vaccinating his whole village. Our public health crew was ready, and all the bicycles were checked for air, etc. Great was their chagrin when word came back that the state service had already reached! I should say it was a disappointment momentarily, but also a real encouragement that such prompt action had already been taken. This is progress.

(Left) Ayodha pilgrims are checked at a compulsory anticholera innoculation center.

(Below) Sr. M. Frederic, M.D. the author, Medical Director of Kurji Holy Family Hosp., Patna.

Three weeks ago, a mother brought her one year old, Asok Kumar. "Save him, please," she said. "He is the only son I have left." "What happened," I asked. "My ten year old, and my six year old boys both died of cholera. Daughters, I have plenty, but this is my son." So we took the little fellow whose only trouble was a moderate malnutrition, and after two weeks, we had him eating everything else besides mother's milk. Now he's on his own.

The problem of cholera has subsided for the present. But when March comes around again, we'll be out with the syringes, helping to prevent the threat of a cholera epidemic in 1962!



Top to Bottom:

Sr. M. Frederic, M.D., checking an x-ray with an Indian colleague.

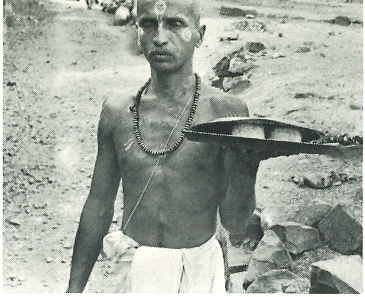
Sr. M. Carmel, R.N., gives a cholera patient fluids by mouth.

A few quarts of saline given by Sr. M. Carol, intravenously, means life, not death for Ram.

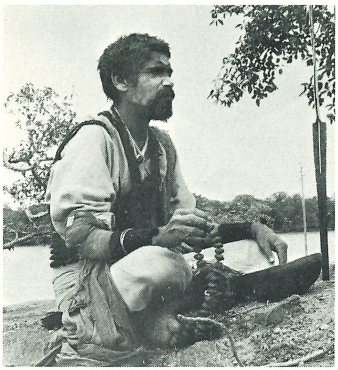
R. I. P.

Please pray for our benefactors recently deceased:

Most Rev. Cletus J. Benjamin, D.D.
Auxiliary Bishop, Philadelphia, Pa.
Rev. Eugene Burke, C.S.C., Notre Dame, Indiana
Rev. John J. Murphy, C.S.C., South Bend, Indiana
Rev. John J. O'Rourke, C.S.C., Austin, Texas
Rev. Joseph Strauss, C.S.S.R., Rochester, N.Y.
Sister M. Hilda Young, M.D., Missionaries of Charity, Calcutta, India
Sister M. Teresita of the Child Jesus, D.C., Boston, Mass.
Mr. Peter A. Dirr, Richmond Hill, N. Y.
Miss Elizabeth Fagan, Wilmington, Delaware
Mrs. Charlotte K. Fasey, Drexel Hill, Pa.
Mrs. Mabel Grookett, Philadelphia, Pa.
Mr. John J. Harley, Cork, Ireland (Brother of Sister M. Ann, S.C.M.M.)
Mr. Walter Keller, Dayton, Ohio
Mr. John Panico, Queens Village, N. Y.
Professor Mary Ryan, Cork, Ireland
Mr. E. Leonard Sheehy, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Mrs. Jule A. Swartz, Philadelphia, Pa.
Mr. John Winter, Sayville, N.Y.



brahmin priest



sadhu

Caste in India Today

brahmin girl

Margaret Peil, M.A.

little outcaste

THE saying that people will not obey laws against their common beliefs and practices has seldom proved to be more true than with the laws designed to destroy India's caste system. The British tried from 1850 on, and India's statement of Fundamental Rights proclaimed that henceforth no citizen was to be denied access to hotels, restaurants, or public places only on grounds of sex, caste, or religion. In 1955, practicing untouchability was made a criminal offense all over India. These laws have been backed up with publicity, movies, and interested workers who go into the villages to demonstrate how various castes should act toward one another.

That all this has not met with unqualified success can be easily imagined. For every city in India there are over 7,500 villages, and most of these have

sweeper

a very close-knit, traditional society where everyone knows his place and expects to live and die in the position into which he was born. Families may have to go more than a hundred miles to find a girl of the right sub-caste for their son to marry, but she will join their family and continue its tradition in the village.

Three great movements are changing this structure more rapidly and more surely than laws and government enthusiasm: education, industrialization, and urbanization. There are too many people on the land, and some of them must move to the cities.

Under the old system, men went into the villages and hired whole groups of people to work in the factory or on a building project. Many of the Medical Mission Sisters' hospitals were built with labor contracted in this way. The whole family worked together, as they would have on the farm. The mother would lay her baby in a secluded corner while she carried bricks on her head up the bamboo scaffolding, and return at intervals to nurse it. When the hospital was completed, all would return to their rural village, hopefully, with enough money to tide them over until the next crop.

Industrialization is changing this. Often a younger son or a single family must go alone to find work. If they move to a city or find work in a factory where there are no others of their subcaste (there are over 3000 subcastes), friends must be found somewhere. Children are allowed to make friends without regard to caste, and women will have their back-fence cronies in India as in America.

Factory work is well paid by Indian standards. The $14-$21 that the factory worker receives per month is more than some professional and many white-collar workers take home. Thus, the lower-caste family may dress and live at a higher level than its "betters" and, what is more important for the death of the caste system, marry the son to a higher caste girl whose father can't afford the wedding to a higher mate.

The great teacher of equality, the public school, is limited in the villages by the shortage of teachers, but in cities it is fully operative and children of all castes study and play together. City life is a mixer for adults too. In the bustle of buses and stores, in factory cafeterias, men haven't the time and lose the inclination to observe all the minute rituals of their caste. These things become less important and caste-consciousness fades into class-consciousness. Lower-caste men who become professionals, doctors or engineers, or who manage to rise in business, find much less caste feeling at the middle and upper class levels, where all have more education and the individual counts for more than the group. Secularism and a decreasing interest in Hinduism as a religion is also prevalent.

It should be remembered that Gandhi condemned untouchability, not the caste system as a whole. There are those who worry that caste will die too quickly and leave a social vacuum with disastrous results to Indian society. What is happening is that caste is gradually being replaced by a class structure based on an increasing industrial working class and a professional-supervisory middle class.

The upper and middle classes, having plenty of people on whom they can look down, are finding it increasingly easy to forget caste distinctions among themselves. The lower class finds this more difficult, but the search for a job is taking them to more distant areas, where linguistic and regional factors become more important than caste.

LEAVES *in India*

Sister Ignatius Marie

TO you, leaves in their proper place are beautiful; a bit of a nuisance, especially to lads who want to play football when they litter the ground and must be raked up and burned; and an asset if you have a compost heap to which you may add them.

But here in rural India, leaves are used in countless ways. I am not referring to their use as fodder, although that is very important, for during the hot, dry season, the cows and goats get little food other than the leaves that fall before them when the lady of the house climbs a tree to break off fodder for them.

At any big feast banana leaves serve as plates for the guests. There are no caterers from whom the host could hire dishes so the plantain leaves are a convenient substitute. They are large enough to hold an adequate supply of rice for the hungriest guest. You have no idea of the heap of rice that chap can consume. Best of all is the fact that there are no dishes to be washed after the guests have departed.

In the larger cities, purchases are wrapped with paper and twine, such as you know. In smaller places, life is more interesting. The bags into which our purchases are put are made from old office records, or examination papers which have been sold as old paper. The purchaser and his family industriously convert the old paper into bags which are, in turn, sold to the small shopkeepers.

We may while away the tedium of the bus ride to our village by reading —the bag that contains the eggs tells us that one Rani Mohau did not pay sufficient attention to study for he got Zero for multiplying sixty-eight by six and getting an answer of four hundred twenty-eight Another more apt pupil, who remain anonymous, thanks to the pasted fold at the bottom of the bag of oranges, rates "correct" for stating that Jahangir succeeded his father Akhbar on the throne in October, 1605. The bag of chillies proclaims the fact that one Devidas S/O Motu was absent from his duties on the 7th and 8th, and in the proper column there is noted that his casual leave is ended so "proper

deduction" is to be made in his salary. My regret is that the next bag contains only a small part of an article about Nur Jahan (Light of the World) the capable wife of Jahangir. Whoever wrote it produced an interesting story.

In the villages, shop keepers buy bundles of fresh leaves from women who gather them in the jungle. Often they are sal leaves but any large leaf serves the purpose. The leaves are cleaned and dried and tied in bundles of one hundred. The woman receives about two cents for a bundle.

What the shop keepers can do with these leaves is interesting. For the woman who buys a seer (two pounds) of rice, he makes a flat bottomed basket from the leaves with sides about two inches high. The leaves are fastened together with thorns, plenty of which are obtained free in the jungle. Into this basket goes the rice—not a grain is spilled then, nor during its journey home on the top of the purchaser's head.

The little girl, who is buying only a few peanuts, gets a cornucopia fashioned from one leaf with the top turned in as a cover so that she will not lose any on her way home.

The next woman who wants atu (whole wheat flour) gets a flat basket with the addition of a rounded cover to assure its protection from the monsoon dampness. Each container is fashioned according to what it is to hold and it is remarkable that they are made up so quickly. It is a matter of only a minute or two.

For the customer who brings his own bottle for cooking oil, one-half a leaf rolled up tightly makes a cheap and very satisfactory cork. When the rice, peanuts and *atu* are consumed by the purchasers, the ever-present goat makes short work of the containers—thereby contributing to the cleanliness of the neighborhood.

It is not only in connection with food that leaves are used. Many houses are roofed with them and if the roofing has been properly renewed before the monsoon begins, the roof is tight and inside is dry. Once the rainy season, about four months, is ended, there is no need to be concerned about the roof. The leaves dry up, the birds tear at them but nothing will be done until the approach of the next monsoon.

Leaves also help to settle the raincoat problem in rural India. A coolie working where burlap bags are available, picks up a bag when a heavy shower starts, folds it lengthwise and tucks one corner of the bottom into the other corner and puts it on his head. He looks like a Capuchin with his hood elongated to reach his knees.

The field workers, having no burlap bags available use another method. At the beginning of the rainy season they make for themselves a garment similar in shape to the folded burlap bag but it is fashioned from leaves, held together with string and sometimes with wire. These, too, reach to the knees and keep out the rain. The front of the wearer is not protected very much but in a heavy downpour, they squat with their backs to the storm and they manage to remain fairly dry. These raincoats last through the monsoon but they are much heavier than you would expect.

We often see a certain type of leaf strung on a string and festooned on the outside of houses or shops to ward off evil. Again a thin leaf instead of paper, serves as a wrapper for the tobacco in the cheap, native cigarette called a "biri."

Leaves *are* important in rural India. There is no doubt about it.

NEWS

PAKISTAN Behind the Veil

Occasionally we get a really shy "purdah" lady patient. A week ago we admitted a middle-aged lady from a small state high up in the Kashmir mountains. She had never been away from home and spoke a dialect which no one in the hospital could understand. When Sister Gemma walked in her room, there was the patient lying in bed, *burkha* and all, only a little red topi sticking out. Mother-in-law was huddled in one corner, and daughter in an opposite nook, peeking around a curtain. Sister at once spied the cause. Our mild little cleaning man was pushing a mop around, totally uninterested in anything except to get through with his work. He was hustled out in record time, and after that the women emerged, smiling and chattering like so many colorful parrots, just like women any place.

Sister M. Elise, M.D.
Holy Family Hospital
Rawalpindi, West Pakistan

INDIA Midnight Call

It all happened when Sister M. Carmela was on retreat and I was asked to substitute if there were any home calls. And a call did come, on a pouring, rainy night at 12:30 p.m. Fortunately, the patient's home was only about a couple of city blocks away (of course there are no city blocks here in Patna). So a graduate midwife and myself cycled out ahead of the two men of the household, with our delivery bag and flashlight (which had a double purpose—light for my cycle, and one for watching the patient, as the only light in the homes are small kerosene lanterns, which give very little light.

The home was very small, consisting of one medium size room, which contained only two charpoys (string-beds) and a few metal trunks containing all their possessions. On the wall hung a picture of the Sacred Heart with a few artificial flowers in a mud vase. In back of the house was a covered porch with the same mud floor as the house. This is where the family did their cooking. The men and the children of the household soon gathered around a blazing fire on the porch. To keep them occupied, we had them build a small fire in a large mud dish and place it in the cold damp room where we waited with the patient. The mother-in-law was helpful in getting us the necessary things we needed. Then when things settled down a bit, and the mother-in-law saw she had a minute to spare, she squatted on the floor and took out her pipe. On seeing that I had taken a special interest in it, she ventured over to show me how it worked.

Tobacco is rolled up in balls and placed in the small cup on top in the center of three or four small pieces of burning coals, the small spout, from which it looks as if tea should come, is where the mouth is applied and a puff is taken, just as one puffs on a cigarette. The smoke comes through small openings in the cup and through the long

FROM OUR HOUSES

neck of the pipe into the spout. She seemed to enjoy it as she squatted on the mud floor in perfect peace. She did not put her pipe away until the nurse and I started to bustle around with the actual delivery.

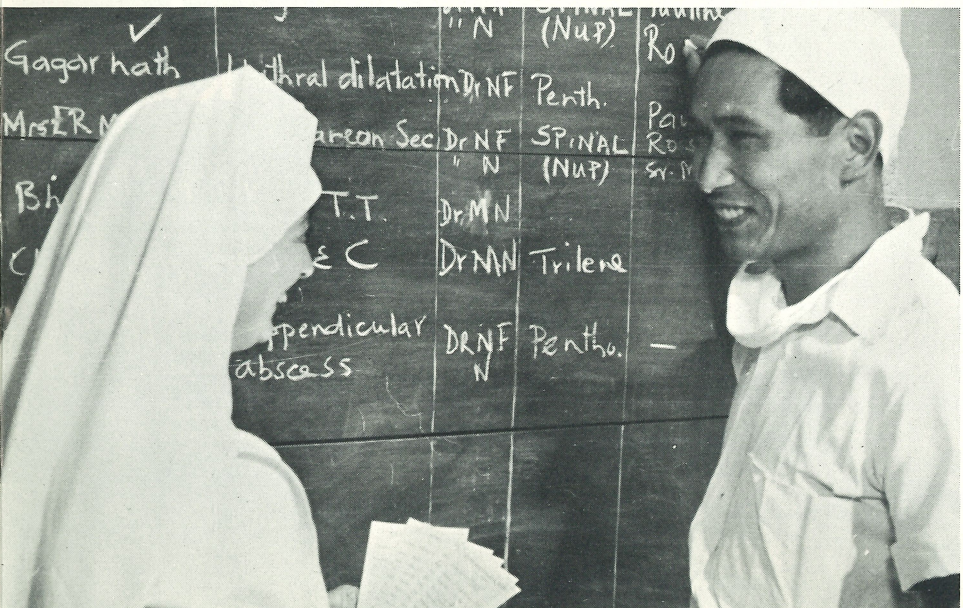
And what a great thing to wrap up that newborn baby boy and take him out to a father who already had two girls and desired a boy so much! After the father had seen the baby, I put him in his grandmother's arms and had her help me put drops into his eyes to prevent that dreaded new-born-blindness. So much of it is seen here. Now grandmother had no longer an interest in her pipe; it stood beside her neglected, as she gave her undivided attention to her new-born grandson.

Sister M. Bernadine, C.R.N.A.
Holy Family Hospital,
Kurji, Patna, India

INDIA **Monkey Distractions**

Thursday afternoon while we were praying in the chapel, there was a group of monkeys playing in the trees outside. They were a great distraction to me. One was eating something, and we discovered later that they had stripped our peach trees of all the fruit.

Sister M. Carmela, R.N.
Holy Family Hospital,
Kurji, Patna, India



Sr. M. Bernardine, anesthetist, explains O.R. schedule to male nurse.

INDIA Journey to the South

Last year we made a trip from Delhi to Kerala to attend a Pharmacists' meeting there. The monsoon was in full swing when we left, and for the first two nights and one-and-a-half days we saw little but wet windows. As we neared Madras, on the southeast coast, the weather began to clear. We were leaving the monsoon behind.

At Madras we were able to get out and stretch our legs for a while before continuing our journey, this time westwards to the opposite coast—the land of the coconut. There is water, water everywhere, and coconut palms, with islands of rice fields and banana plantations between.

We were able to visit our hospital in Thuruthipuram. To get there we had to cross a maze of waterways in a rowboat, river and sea all mixed up and nothing but coconut palms in sight, waving low over the water's edge on all banks. Forests of them, it seemed to me, and I was vividly reminded of the "Adventure on the Amazon" type of story which had enthralled me as a child. I looked in vain for a crocodile to sidle up to the side of the boat. There is a fair variety of fish to be caught. The staple diet in these parts is rice, fish, coconut and bananas. The varieties of the latter are almost unbelievable, more than apples in England. There are tiny sweet yellow ones to be eaten in two dainty bites, large orange-red ones that are baked as a vegetable, and every size and color between.

Our three days' stay passed all too quickly. The beauty captured our hearts, but it did not blind our eyes to the unbeautiful side which exists with it: poverty and sickness. The most noticeable disease was filaria, which results in ugly swollen legs.

SISTER M. ESTELLE, *B.Pharm.*
Holy Family Hospital
New Delhi

† R.I.P.

On May 4, His Ex. Most Rev. Cletus J. Benjamin consecrated our new novitiate altar. On May 15, Bishop Benjamin died very suddenly. "In Thee he hoped, in Thee he believed, may he, in Thy mercy, be united to Thee forevermore."

Congratulations!
On May 17, the Most Rev. Vincent McCauley, C.S.C. was consecrated at Notre Dame, Indiana as the first Bishop of the new diocese of Fort Portal, in Uganda, British East Africa. Bishop McCauley, a veteran missionary worked for many years in East Pakistan.

The Most Reverend Vincent J. McCauley, C.S.C.

GHANA One Man Must Die

On Friday a man was admitted with cardiac failure. All Sunday he was unconscious. At the noon visiting hour he was surrounded by visitors and when they realized he could not talk they became excited. One 'educated member' (spoke English) was sent to inform me that they would now take him home. I answered "not on Sunday." They said, there were not enough hours for him to live until Monday. I remained firm. Then they assembled in the office and the most important member sat down. They informed me that the man sitting down was the Chief of Boyam. The patient was a sub-chief of the village and the keeper of the stool (symbol of authority) properties such as gold. For the good of all of the town people of Boyam I must allow them to take the patient home. Once the patient had informed them of the hiding place of the gold, he could die in peace. On inquiring how they would make him talk in his present condition, they said they had a certain 'sunsum' that the fetish priest would use to enable the patient to talk. There was nothing we could do to prevent them from taking him home for the 'good of the village'.

Holy Family Hospital,
Techiman, Ghana

GHANA Etiquette

The older generation here is the personification of African etiquette. They really have true dignity as they leave their sandals outside the Church or hospital office, and drop their *ntoma*

(cloth) off their one shoulder (a sign of respect) when they converse with the Sisters. Their gratitude is also exemplary. I was at the dispensary the other morning when one of our leprosy patients brought us a half dozen eggs. How much he himself could have benefited physically from this offering! But I know his spiritual benefit will surpass his highest expectations.

SISTER M. DE MONTFORT, R.N.
Holy Family Hospital,
Berekum, Ghana

Another Doctor for the Missions. On Junue 4, Sister M. Paul (Bazinet) received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Ottawa. Sister Paul, M.D. will begin her internship on July 1, at St. Francis Hospital, Trenton New Jersey.

"LET NOT THE HOURS
PASS BY IN THE DARK.
KINDLE THE LAMP OF
LOVE WITH THY LIFE."—Tagore

YOUR WILL

can help the Medical Mission Sisters bring health and healing to the sick and suffering of mission lands. The following approved form of bequest may be used.

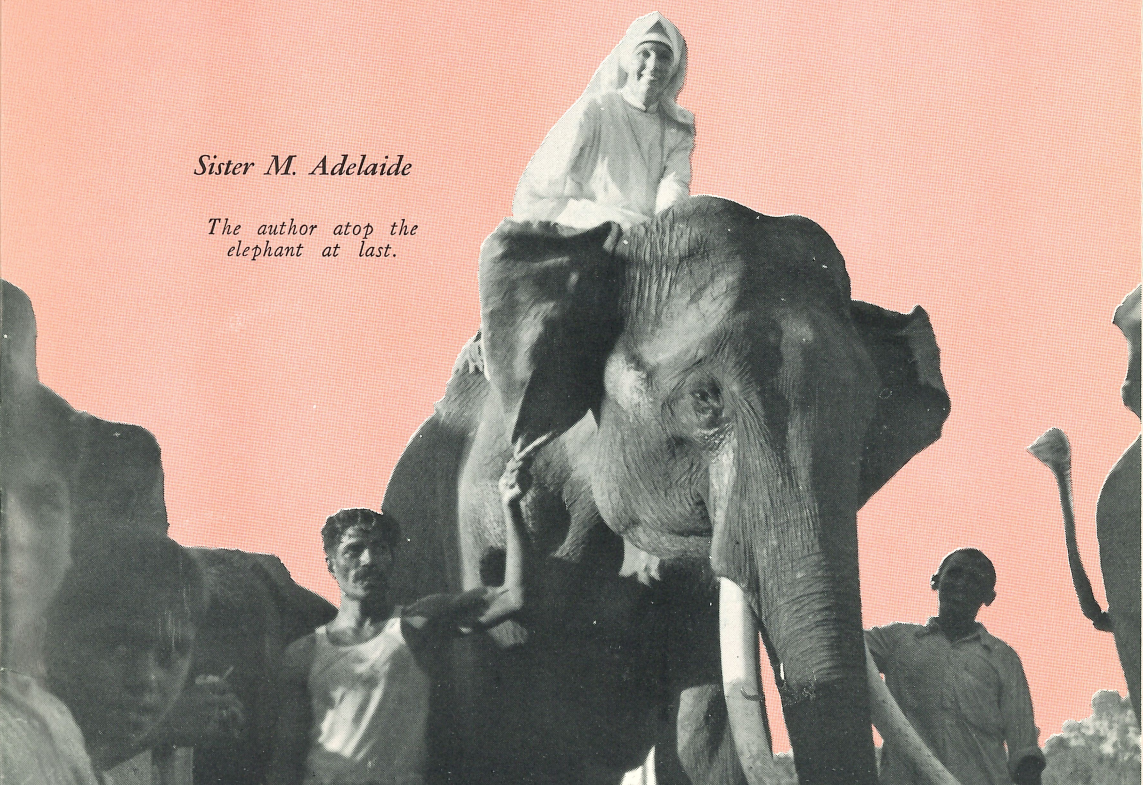
"I hereby give (devise) and bequeath to the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries (also known as the Medical Mission Sisters), an institution incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland, and its successors forever the sum of $_____for its purposes,"

If you have already made your will, it is not necessary to make a new one. It is sufficient that a codicil be added, using the above.

Call an Elephant

HERE in Patna City we frequently call a rickshaw, a tom-tom, or a bundgary—in your language, a bicycle with a seat for passengers in the rear, a flat-topped wagon pulled by a horse, or a closed medieval carriage drawn by a team. Only people with money call a cab—we never do. In the outlying mission stations missionaries call an elephant. And even here in the city occasionally we have the pleasure of riding atop these soft footed animals whose

Sister M. Adelaide



The author atop the elephant at last.

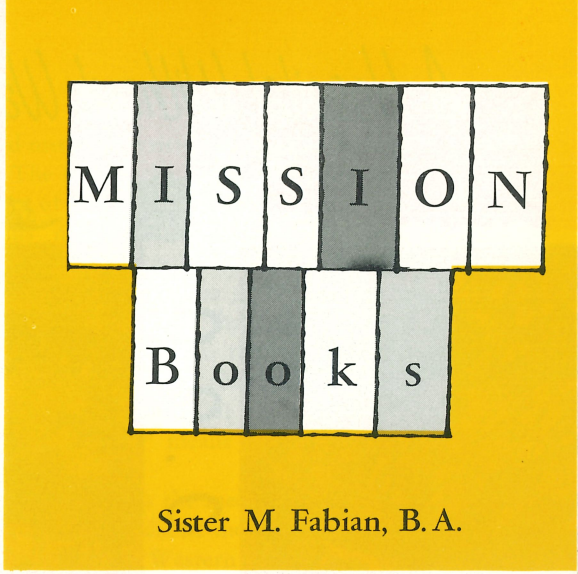
favorite pastime is grinding up banana trees.

Photographers get all sorts of requests—and this particular one came a little out of season. A Sister was asked to take a ride on an elephant, just after the Hindu feast days were over and all the elephants used in the processions had left town. Where to find such a conveyance? Sister-doctor rushed over from the dispensary to report that a little boy who spoke only Tamil was having a conversation with one of our India Sisters from the South. He had received medicine for his sickness and was now telling her about his circus troupe and the two big elephants and the two little elephants. He assured Sister that if we came to the circus, Sister could get up on an elephant.

That afternoon we set out with the camera to find the circus grounds. It was located about two miles from the hospital overlooking a picturesque lake in a secluded spot. "Bombay Circus" over the gate proclaimed its respectability. It was mid-afternoon and things were quiet; men and animals were just waking up from their siesta. The sun was drying up the mud which a downpour of rain had left. Inquiries about the elephants sent us to the mahout. The elephants were close by his tent—a mammoth one with tusks, another a trifle smaller, and the two babies. It was quite evident that they had spent their siesta rolling in the mud. The mahout was very cooperative and provided paper and pencil to pen a note to the manager who was not on the premises. "Could the Sister get her picture taken on the elephant?" Anticipating a favorable reply the mahout loosed the elephants and took them down to the lake to remove the coat of mud. The elephant's bath is a lesson in perfect obedience. Cautiously the huge beasts stepped into the water, slowly they submerged. Then as the caretakers began to scrub they rolled from side to side at each command until every inch of their bodies were clean.

In the meantime the manager had offered the use of his elephants with pleasure and expressed his desire to have a picture of them. The big fellow was brought forth ready for his rider. His backbone protruded a foot above the rest of his body and we waited while the attendants went, as we supposed, to bring the platform and heavy padding which would make his back level, anticipating the ascent up using his tail for a ladder. However, when the attendant returned, he carried only a thin net which he threw over the elephant's back. Then the mahout ordered Mr. Elephant to kneel down, poked little steps in his neck, and invited me to ascend.

After all the trouble, the only polite thing to do was go up. To be truthful the neck of an elephant makes a much better staircase than the tail. It was not until I was up that I realized that I was not going to be a passenger but the "mahout"—and how to stay on that ridge of a backbone and how not to slip down over his head! "*Memsahib,* put your other foot over his neck"—and there I was astride. "Now hold on to his ears"—and as the elephant arose I towered into the air. With both hands holding to the "ear handles," I waited what seemed an eternity for that picture to be snapped. In the meantime a fly was bothering my mount, and he insisted upon having one ear loose to fan himself. In another minute he was doing his best to free the other one also, but I clung desperately as to a lifesaver on a rolling sea of flesh. The pictures were snapped. Then it was over and he knelt down to let me climb down his staircase to earth, with a sigh of relief on both our parts.



Sister M. Fabian, B.A.

DR. IDA: The Story of Dr. Ida of Vellore, by Dorothy Clarke Wilson. McGraw-Hill, New York. 358 pp. $5.95.

Ida Scudder's family boasted several generations of Protestant missionaries in India. Left in America for her education, Ida, haunted by terrible memories of a childhood when famine struck India, determined to break away from the family tradition. At twenty, she was forced to return to help her mother who was ill. Back in India, she was struck by the need of the women who could not be treated by male doctors. She returned to America to study medicine so that she could join her family's missionary endeavors as a doctor. Founding the Vellore Medical School and Center, she has spent over fifty years in India as a medical missionary. Dr. Ida comes to the reader as a warm and generous woman, completely devoted and dedicated.

AFRICAN WOMEN SPEAK. Maryknoll Publications, 117 pp., $1.00.

This is the report of the Regional Seminar of World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, which met in Togo in 1958. Women from ten African countries met with European and American women to discuss the problems of woman in the new Africa. The special difficulties of women in the African social set-up were studied, as well as the evolving role of women in civic, social and religious movements.

LATIN AMERICA: The Development of Its Civilization, by Helen Miller. Bailey & Abraham Nasatir, New York. Prentice-Hall, 818 pp. $7.95.

As world interest continues to focus on the Latin American Republics, it is very important to have some idea of the history of these countries. The past teaches us how to act in the future, if we study it wisely. This excellent history combines historical events with cultural developments to present a good background picture of our southern neighbors, their past, present and hopes for the future.

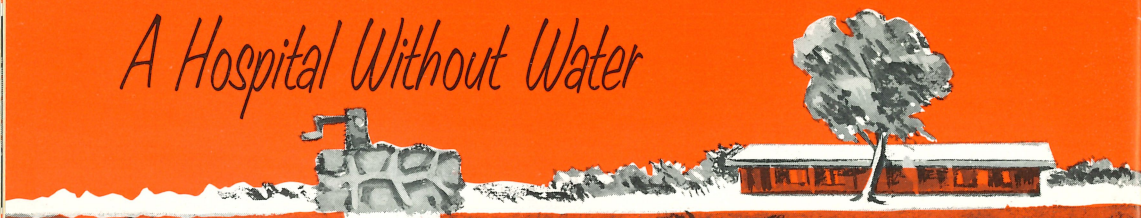
ETHIOPIA. Jean Doresse, New York. Putnam's, 239 pp., $5.95.

Approaching the study of Ethiopia from the archeologist's viewpoint, Mr. Doresse invites his reader into that mysterious land of legend, myth, and romance. Beautifully illustrated with art reproductions and photographs of archeological finds, the book is a fascinating study of an ancient culture as it developed over a period of two thousand years.

THE NEW AFRICA. Ellen and Attilio Gatti, N.Y. Scribner's 213 pp., $3.95.

The new Africa is viewed here, but very much in brief. After an introduction on the independence movements, and the changes in Africa, there are short sections on each of the countries, made up of odd information, historical, political, social and biographical.

A Hospital Without Water



$6,000.00

During the WET SEASON, our Holy Family Hospital, in Techiman, Ghana, tropical Africa, must depend entirely on RAIN WATER for drinking, washing, bathing, scrubbing, etc., also for the operating rooms and Pharmacy.

In the DRY SEASON, almost the whole hospital staff, must spend three hours daily hauling water from the river — a back-breaking and time-consuming task.

A Bore-hole Well would give the hospital all the water it needs. It would cost about $6,000. Will you help? Our Lord has promised a special reward to those who give even a cup of water in His Name.

MEDICAL MISSION SISTERS, Philadelphia 11, Pa.

Dear Sisters:

Here is my gift $ _____ for a WELL for Techiman.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

the
medical
past of

INDIA

Ayur-Veda

Many concepts of medicine being emphasized today have centuries—old roots. For example, in modern medicine great importance is attached to the psychosomatic aspects of disease. But in an ancient Ayur-Vedic text we find the statement, "All physical diseases have a mental counterpart, and all mental diseases have a physical counterpart, and it is difficult to draw a line of demarcation as to how far the treatment should be directed toward the physical disease."

The oldest and most sacred books of the Hindus are collectively called the *Veda,* a word which signified knowledge. The Veda is composed of several portions; the *Rig-Veda* is the oldest and is considered sacred by the Hindus. The *Vedas* are not simply religious texts, but rather books of wisdom, culture and medicine written by various authors.

The last of the Vedic collection consists of the Atharva-Veda, which contains medical references drawn from magic and sorcery. In the following centuries, the Hindus greatly improved upon and added to the primitive cults of the Atharva-Veda; the large volumes of medical literature that finally evolved are now referred to as the *Ayur-Veda,* which literally means "knowledge of life."

Ayur-Veda is the medical science still practiced in India in these modern times of allopathic (Western) medicine, and Ayur-Vedic schools are still functioning there. The peak of Ayur-Vedic medicine was reached in the period following the Vedic era. Two of the most important medical manuals are the *Charakasamhita,* or *Charaka's Collection, of Susruta.*

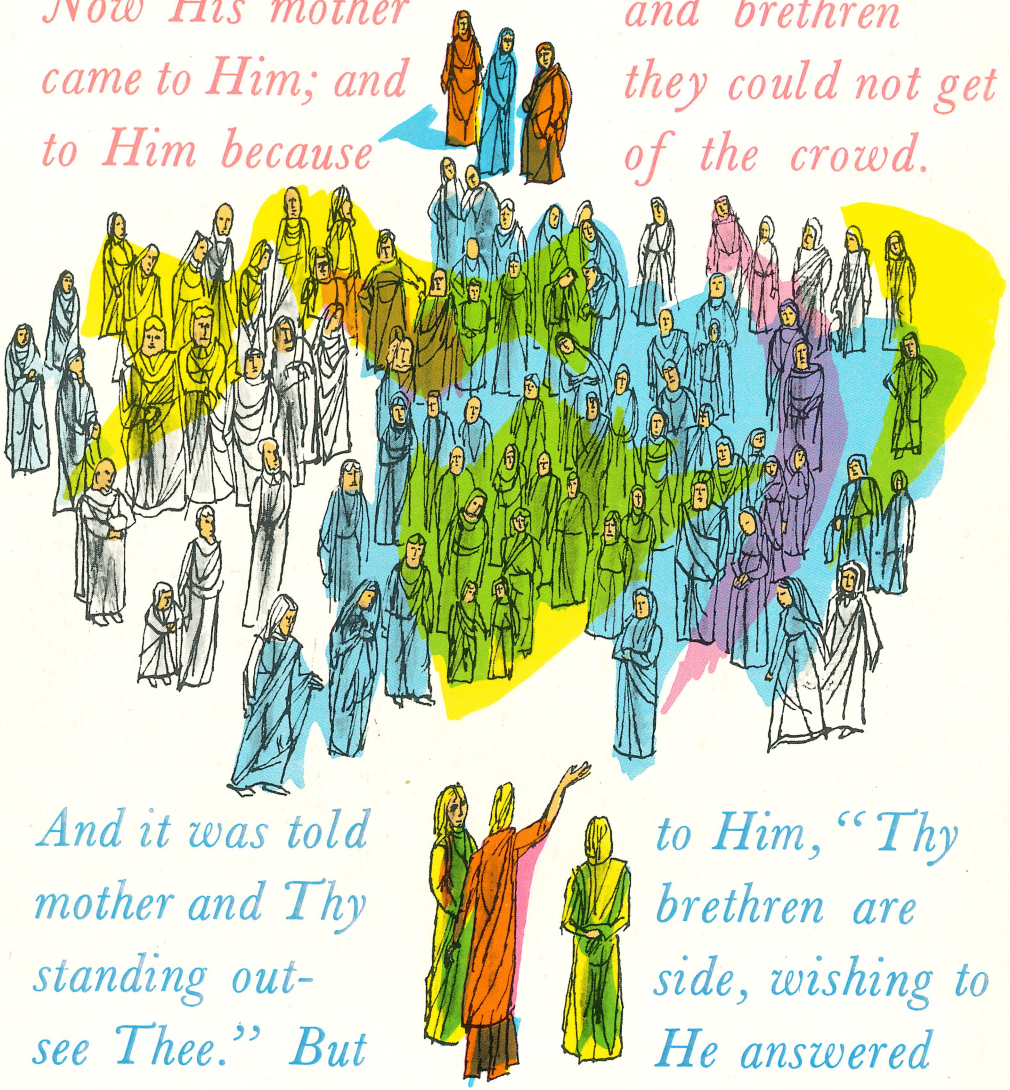
Charaka's Collection is primarily a pharmacopoeia, listing about 500 medicinals prepared from herbs and metals and mixed in a specific manner. Some of these herbal remedies have counterparts in the *British Pharmacopoeia* under different names. Special institutions have been opened in the last two years in Bombay, Jamuagar, and Dehra Dun, India, in which modern scientific tests are being applied to ancient and modern systems of medicine.

The Collections of Susruta are devoted mainly to surgery and diagnosis, but they include information on anatomy, pathology, midwifery and psychology, with an allusion to the "bedside manner." Susruta, probably the world's first plastic surgeon, described in detail rhinoplasty.

The collections of both Susruta and Charaka were translated into Persian and Arabic in 800 A.C. and arabic medicine later became the basis for European medicine.

Sister M. Francisco, M.D.

Now His mother and brethren came to Him; and they could not get to Him because of the crowd.



And it was told to Him, "Thy mother and Thy brethren are standing outside, wishing to see Thee." But He answered and said to them, "My mother and my brethren are they who hear the word of God and act upon it."

LUKE—8:19-21